

**HISTORIC RESOURCES ASSESSMENT OF
2711, 2725, AND 2729 GRANGER AVENUE,
NATIONAL CITY, SAN DIEGO COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA**

Prepared for:

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August 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Historic Resources Assessment Report was prepared by ASM Affiliates for the Lincoln Acres Library and Community Center project located at 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue and corresponding with Assessor Parcel Numbers 564-061-07, 564-061-08, and 564-061-23 in National City, San Diego County, California.

The County of San Diego proposes to reconstruct the existing Lincoln Acres Library/Community Center with a new library, community center, and recreation area. The proposed project will be constructed in the same location as the existing Lincoln Acres Library/Community Center. Currently, the project parcels contain a library, a retired fire station, and five residential units. The assessment of these buildings included archival research, field documentation, and recommendations of their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) prior to their proposed demolition for the project.

While the buildings in question were over 50 years of age, thereby warranting the necessity of this Historic Resource Assessment, ASM recommends that none possessed sufficient historic or architectural character for eligibility to the NRHP or the CRHR. This finding is based on the study of each building's history, architecture, and integrity.

1. INTRODUCTION

ASM Affiliates, Inc. (ASM) has prepared this Historic Resources Assessment Report as supporting documentation for BRG Consulting, Inc. (BRG) related to the Lincoln Acres Library and Community Center Master Plan, located at 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue and corresponding with Assessor Parcel Numbers 564-061-07, 564-061-08, and 564-061-23 in National City, San Diego County, California (Figure 1).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The County of San Diego proposes to reconstruct the existing Lincoln Acres Library/Community Center with a new library, community center, and recreation area. The proposed project will be constructed in the same location as the existing Lincoln Acres Library/Community Center.

The Lincoln Acres Library is the smallest branch library in the County of San Diego's library system. At approximately 1,970 square feet, including the Community Center (761 square feet), the building is less than half the size of the new library in Bonita. Despite its size, the library is well-used by the community. Currently it is sixth most active branch, out of 33, in the system. The Community Center is operated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The building containing the library is a portable building that was built in 1947 and moved onto the site in 1961. The current building is over 60 years old and has outlived its useful life. To the north of the library/community center is a former firehouse station for the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District (LSFPD). The building is currently not used and it is anticipated that the LSFPD will deed the building and property to the County to use or demolish at its discretion. This building is approximately 2,400 square feet and the property is approximately 0.08 acres in size.

To the east of the library/community center and former firehouse is a recreation area managed by the Parks and Recreation Department that has a number of recently-installed amenities, including full court basketball, play structures and plantings. The recreation area is actively used by the community. There is a healthy and mature California Pepper tree just east of the library/community center that provides shade.

The library/community center, recreation area, and firehouse station are located on approximately 0.55 acres of land. The neighborhood surrounding the site is mostly residential and fairly compact, with sidewalks and narrow streets. Currently, the only available parking for the site is parallel street parking. There is one ADA accessible parallel parking spot in front of the community room.

The County has an option to purchase the property at 2729 Granger Avenue, which is adjacent to and located directly south of the library/community center. This property is 0.28 acres in size. The County's intent in purchasing this property is to utilize the land to build the new Lincoln Acres Library and Community Center. The combined acreage for the project site is approximately 0.83 acres.

METHODOLOGY

Currently, the project site contains a library, a retired fire station, and five residential units at 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue in Lincoln Acres. The residential units are located at 2729 Granger Avenue. Archival research was conducted at the County Assessor's Office and the San Diego Historical Society to determine the dates of construction of the buildings and to provide a historical context. Historical maps and aerial photographs were also consulted for information regarding the history of land use of these parcels and original building plans, where available. Dr. Barry Stiefel, Senior Architectural Historian completed the building assessments. ASM's Project Historian, Sarah Stringer-Bowsher, collected pertinent historical documents. The assessment included a field inspection, detailed photo documentation to record architectural style features, and an assessment of historical integrity. This information is provided in this technical report detailing the results of the historical resources inventory. This report includes a project description, historical context, building assessments, and an assessment of project effects. ASM also completed an archeological records search of the .83-acre project area. The records search was conducted at the South Coastal Information Center, SDSU, to identify any previously recorded cultural resources; no previously recorded resources were indicated in the project area.



Figure 1. Aerial photo showing the location of the project site location (from Google Earth).

2. HISTORIC CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Lincoln Acres is an unincorporated area of San Diego County located within the boundaries of the incorporated city-suburb of National City. National City was a community that grew out of the 1880s land boom and as part of the Rancho de la Nacion (*San Diego Union Tribune* 1963). After establishing a post office (1870), a wharf for trade that the Texas and Pacific Railroad bought and used (1871-1872), and a stagecoach road (1873), National City incorporated in 1887 and became the port town that aided in early development in the south bay area (Phillips 1962). The late 1880s boom coincided with the completion of the National City and Otay Railroad (June 1887) as an important accomplishment of the San Diego Land and Town Company to interconnect communities in the south bay area. Settlement in the area also required the building of Sweetwater Dam (1888) for domestic water and irrigation, and attracting interest in five-acre tracts that became Chula Vista (Flanigan and Coons 2007; Phillips 1962). Chula Vista developed into a citrus grove community with only 550 people living in the community by 1910 (*San Diego Union Tribune* 1963). One year later, the small town became a city on October 17, 1911 (*San Diego Union Tribune* 1931). After a series of railway merges, the National City and Otay Railroad became part of the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railroad in 1917 as part of John D. Sprekels' interests and further opened up the south bay area (Flanigan and Coons 2007; Summers 1956:36). By 1920, Chula Vista attracted a population of 1,718 that more than doubled by 1930. National City grew even faster with a population of 3,116 in 1920 and 7,301 in 1930. By 1940, Chula Vista grew to 5,138 and National City grew to 10,344 (Pourade n.d.).

Although population increases in San Diego County nearly doubled between 1900 and 1910 and again between 1920 and 1930, they skyrocketed during the post-World War II boom with a 147 percent population increase between 1941 and 1945 alone (Etulain and Malone 1989). Defense contract work from the mobilization of World War II greatly contributed to the growing population: "California led all other states in national defense expenditures and contracts awarded during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1941" (*Oceanside Daily Blade-Tribune*, 11 August 1941:6). A direct result of a heightened National Defense program was a need to create housing for men working on defense contracts. The United States Housing Authority, the Army, the Navy, Federal Works Agency, the Public Building Administration, the Farm Security Administration, and the Defense Homes Corporation built dwellings for those workers in an effort to meet the demand (*Oceanside Daily Blade-Tribune*, 25 September 1941:1, 6). Rohr Aircraft Corporation first made its home in Chula Vista and provided new manufacturing jobs. Lemon groves quickly succumbed to incoming housing tracts to support the population increase that more than tripled in Chula Vista between 1940 and 1950 (*San Diego Union Tribune* 1963). The Colorado River aqueduct provided water to the Sweetwater Dam and aided in securing resources for a burgeoning populace in Chula Vista (SDHS 1949). By 1963, Chula Vista was the second largest city in the County (*San Diego Union Tribune* 1963).

Midwestern farmers that had come to California in the wake of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl first settled Lincoln Acres during the 1930s. The area of Lincoln Acres was initially developed as small farms that were eventually redeveloped into single-family housing (Figure 2). This housing development was associated with the urbanization and suburbanization of the greater San Diego metropolitan area that took place in relation to the World War II economic boom. As mentioned previously, San Diego became a major center for military development for the Pacific Theater, which continued after the War with a burgeoning industry. Today, the residents of Lincoln Acres are predominantly blue-collar working class; however, the demographics of the area have shifted from Midwesterners to those of Latino background, primarily from Mexico whose border lies several miles south of Lincoln Acres.

In relation to the fire station in the project area, Lincoln Acres presently relies on the County of San Diego for most of its governmental services, with the one exception being the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District. This fire district was founded in 1944 and owns no fire trucks nor has any firefighters on its payroll. This special district has a board of three members who have the sole task of administering a contract with the National City Fire Department, which provides fire protection to the community (*National City Star-News* 1982).

Regarding the library on the project site, the San Diego County Library was established in 1913 and began with eight branch locations in its first year in Bonita, Campo, El Cajon, Julian, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway, and Ramona. More branches soon followed in the years to come; however, none of these branch library locations were initially located in dedicated facilities. Extra rooms and corners of public buildings, stores, clubhouses, and even private residences were used for branch libraries. The owners of the buildings that housed the respective branch library locations often also served as the volunteer branch librarian (St. John 2008).

The following information concerning the history of the library is excerpted from a Community Profile on file at the San Diego County Library headquarters:

Lincoln Acres Library was originally located from 1940 to 1944 at the Community Club located at what is now a private residence at 2711 Fenton Place. In 1944 the library closed for several months due to 'lack of suitable quarters.' In June of 1945, the Helping Hand Circle of Lincoln Acres, a civic-minded women's group acquired two lots on Ridgeway Drive and decided to deed the lots to the County for public use. On June 18, 1947, a new County building with room for a Community Center and Library opened. The building was acquired from the Vista CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). In 1951, a small addition was made to the building by the County. The Lincoln Acres Coordinating Council raised money for park equipment. At some point the original clapboard building was stuccoed over and painted. In the summer of 1997 the Parks and Recreation Department and Library sponsored a 50th Anniversary celebration. The Lincoln Acres Friends of the Library was established in 1986 (San Diego County Library 2007).

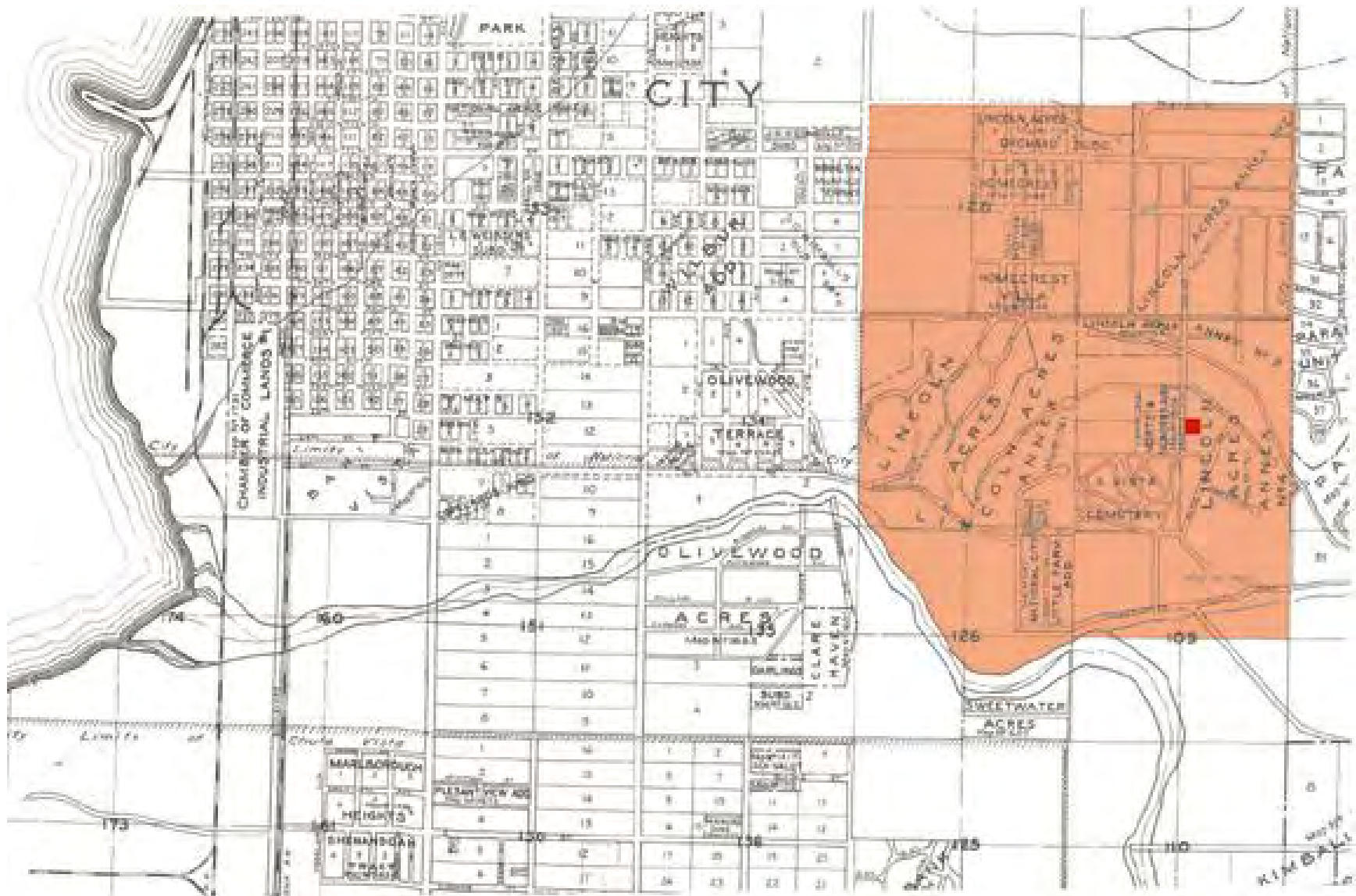


Figure 2. Historic map highlighting Lincoln Acres from 1928 with the current project location.

3. DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED PROPERTIES

2711 GRANGER AVENUE – LOWER SWEETWATER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIREHOUSE

The Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District Firehouse at 2711 Granger Avenue was completed in 1945 shortly after the founding of the Fire District. The building exhibits a nondescript vernacular, utilitarian architectural style. The Firehouse is a one-story, stucco exterior structure with two garage doors, a pedestrian entrance, and a sliding aluminum-frame window on the front elevation, with a pyramidal-shaped composition shingle roof (Figure 3). The doors and windows on the front elevation all appear to be more recent than circa 1945 construction. According to the San Diego County Assessor's office building records, the Firehouse has a concrete foundation and wood frame construction. The exterior originally had shiplap wood siding and wood casement windows, which are still visible on the rear elevation (Figure 4).



Figure 3. Front elevation of the Lincoln Acres Firehouse.



Figure 4. Rear elevation of the Lincoln Acres Firehouse.

2725 GRANGER AVENUE – LINCOLN ACRES BRANCH LIBRARY, SAN DIEGO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

The Lincoln Acres Branch Library building has undergone numerous changes including location. County Assessor Commercial/ Industrial Building records for the library indicate that it was constructed in 1945 (County Assessor 2008). The building was acquired from the Vista Civilian Conservation Corps. It was first used in a different location in Lincoln Acres and has been in its current location since 1961 (San Diego County Library 2007). The building exhibits a nondescript vernacular, utilitarian architectural style. The one-story, stucco exterior structure has two entrances with metal doors at opposite sides of the front elevation as well as six double-hung vinyl windows (which are asymmetrically distributed). Each of the entrances is protected by front gable portico that terminates into the building's composition shingle, side gabled roof (Figure 5). All exterior architectural detailing appears to post-date the original date of construction, thus suggesting significant exterior architectural modification. According to the San Diego County Assessor's Commercial/ Industrial building records, the Library has a concrete foundation and wood framing. Originally, the Library had wood siding; all evidence of this has been removed, including on the rear elevation of the building (Figure 6).



Figure 5. Front elevation of the Lincoln Acres Branch Library.



Figure 6. Rear elevation of the Lincoln Acres Branch Library.

2729 GRANGER AVENUE – SINGLE-FAMILY HOME AND ASSOCIATED OUTBUILDINGS

2729 Granger Avenue is a single-family, one-story residence that was constructed in 1925 according to County of San Assessor building records. The vernacular residence has a wood shingle exterior, a concrete foundation, and a front gabled roof that is presently covered with a rolled composition roofing material. The original door and double-hung windows are made of wood, though some of the windows have been replaced with metal. On the rear of the house there is a shed-roof wing addition (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The main house at 2729 Granger Avenue.

Sharing the property parcel with the single-family house at 2729 Granger Avenue are four vernacular outbuildings that are currently in use as rental units. The dates of construction are unknown for these housing units. They each have wood siding (appearing to be plywood in some instances) and the same rolled composition roofing material found on the main house. Two of the houses have flat roofs (Figures 8 and 9), one has a gable roof (see Figure 9), and the fourth has a hipped roof (Figure 10). The quality of construction is poor.



Figure 8. Front elevation of Rental Unit 1.



Figure 9. Rental Unit 2 with hipped roof.

3. Description of Affected Properties



Figure 10. Rental Unit 3.



Figure 11 Rental Unit 4

4. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS IN PROJECT AREA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The criteria for NRHP eligibility are stated as follows (36 CFR 60.4):

The NRHP is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The NRHP is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. In general, a resource may be eligible for listing in the NRHP if it is associated with significant historical events or persons, if it possesses architectural value, or if it has the potential to yield historic or prehistoric information. The NRHP is an authoritative guide to significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the U.S. In order to be determined eligible for listing on the NRHP, a property must be demonstrated to be significant under one or more of the following criteria (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995):

Criterion A: That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

Criterion B: That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

Criterion C: That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

Criterion D: That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Generally, properties eligible for the NRHP are at least 50 years old. Properties less than 50 years of age must be exceptionally important to be considered eligible for listing. Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the NRHP (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995).

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The criteria for eligibility to the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) are stated as follows (PRC Section 21084.1, 14 CCR Section 15064.5(3)):

The CRHR is an authoritative guide to significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in California, and functions in a parallel manner to the NRHP. The evaluative criteria used to determine eligibility are closely based on those developed for use by the National Park Service for determining eligibility for the NRHP. In order to be determined eligible for listing in the CRHR a property must be demonstrated to be significant under one or more of the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2: Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

Criterion 3: Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

Criterion 4: Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Generally, properties eligible for the CRHR are at least 50 years old. Properties less than 50 years of age must be exceptionally important to be considered eligible for listing. All properties listed on the NRHP are automatically listed on the CRHP (California Office of Historic Preservation 2006b).

5. INTEGRITY

Properties eligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR must also be deemed to have sufficient historical integrity. The concept of integrity is essential to identifying the important physical characteristics of historical resources, and hence, evaluating adverse change. According to the California Office of Historic Preservation, integrity is defined as “the authenticity of a historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics or historic fabric that existed during the resource’s period of significance” (California Office of Historic Preservation 2006a:3). A property is examined for seven variables or aspects that together comprise integrity. These aspects, which are based closely on the NRHP, are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The CRHR may include properties that have suffered a greater degree of impairment to their integrity than would be acceptable for listing on the NRHP. For example, a resource that has lost its historic character or appearance for the NRHP may still have sufficient integrity for the CRHR if it maintains the potential to yield significant or historical information or specific data (California Office of Historic Preservation 2006b). Guidelines published by the National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior 1995) define the seven key characteristics of integrity as:

Location: the place where the historic property was constructed

Design: the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure, and style of the property

Setting: the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s)

Materials: the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property

Workmanship: the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history

Feeling: the property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time

Association: the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

6. ASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

As mentioned in the previous section, the criteria used to determine eligibility for the CRHR are closely based on those developed for use by the National Park Service for determining eligibility of historical and cultural resources for the NRHP. For example, Criterion A for the NRHP is very similar to Criterion 1 of the CRHR, which are resources that are significant to the broader patterns of history. The following assessment will address 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue within a single narrative for the purpose of simplification.

According to ASM's research, 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue were all built more than 50 years ago (the 1940s for the Firehouse and Library and 1925 for the residence). Therefore, the properties satisfy the 50-year age requirement to warrant an assessment. However, over the course of ASM's research, we did not identify any significant events in local, regional, or national history directly related to any of the properties. This does not discount the fact that the Firehouse and Library were and are important to the unincorporated neighborhood of Lincoln Acres, as two of the very few civic-type buildings, but no known significant historical events could be tied to them in order to warrant more serious consideration for Criteria A and 1 of the NRHP and CRHR, respectively. Furthermore, it was found that the Library building was built as a portable building in 1945 and was first used in a different location. Not until 1961 was it placed in its present location (County Assessor 2008). This relocation affects the Library's association with the site with respect to integrity. Little historical information was recovered for the residence at 2729 Granger Avenue or for its associated rental housing units. Historical research failed to identify any association with people or events significant in local, regional or national history. However, based on professional experience and the relative modesty of the buildings, there is a strong indication that these structures are unlikely to have an association with any historically important persons or events.

ASM's field visit and site inspection for 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue was conducted to assess possible eligibility of the properties under Criteria C and 3 of the NRHP and CRHR, which addresses architecture, construction, and design. All of the buildings exhibit a nondescript vernacular, utilitarian architectural style as well as varying degrees of inappropriate exterior modification which compromises their integrity. Furthermore, building records did not identify an architect or builder for any of the buildings (County Assessor 2008). Modest vernacular buildings such as these are not likely to be associated with a master architect or builder.

Criteria D and 4 of the NRHP and CRHR apply mainly to eligibility of archaeological sites and is not applicable to building assessments. A records search was conducted at the South Coastal Information Center located at SDSU and no historic or cultural sites were identified at the project site that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

7. CONCLUSION

While meeting the 50-year age requirement, none of the buildings at 2711, 2725, and 2729 Granger Avenue appears to meet any of the four criteria for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. Therefore, we recommend the properties on Granger Avenue be determined not eligible for these Registers due to their lack of historical and architectural significance and their poor integrity. A records search was obtained from South Coastal Information Center, SDSU, to identify any previously recorded cultural resources. No previously recorded cultural resources were identified. Therefore, no significant historic or cultural resource impacts would occur as a result of the proposed demolition of the structures on site and the development of the proposed project. No further treatment is recommended.

REFERENCES

California Office of Historic Preservation

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http://sohosandiego.org/reflections/2007_2/15_leatherb.html

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- 2008 *Master Plan for Lincoln Acres Library and Community Center*. Prepared for the County of San Diego, Department of General Services/Facility Management, San Diego County Library, San Diego, California.

APPENDIX A

SCIC RECORDS SEARCH RESULTS

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM SITE FILES RECORD SEARCH

Company: ASM Affiliates
Company Representative: Sarah Stringer-Bowsher
Date of Request: 7/1/2008
Date Processed: 7/2/2008
Project Identification: 2717 Granger Avenue (Project #14350 - Lincoln Acres/ Granger Avenue)
Search Radius: 1/4 mile

Historical Resources: DSL **Date:** 7/2/2008

Trinomial (CA-SDI) and Primary (P-37) site maps have been reviewed. All sites within the project boundaries and the specified radius of the project area have been plotted. Copies of the site record forms have been included for all recorded sites.

Previous Archaeological Project Boundaries: DSL **Date:** 7/2/2008

Project boundary maps have been reviewed. National Archaeological Database (NADB) citations for reports within the project boundaries and within the specified radius of the project area have been included.

Historic Maps: DSL **Date:** 7/2/2008

The historic maps on file at the South Coastal Information Center have been reviewed, and copies have been included.

Historic Addresses: DSL **Date:** 7/2/2008

A map and database of historic addresses (formerly Geofinder) has been included.

HOURS: 2

COPIES: 23

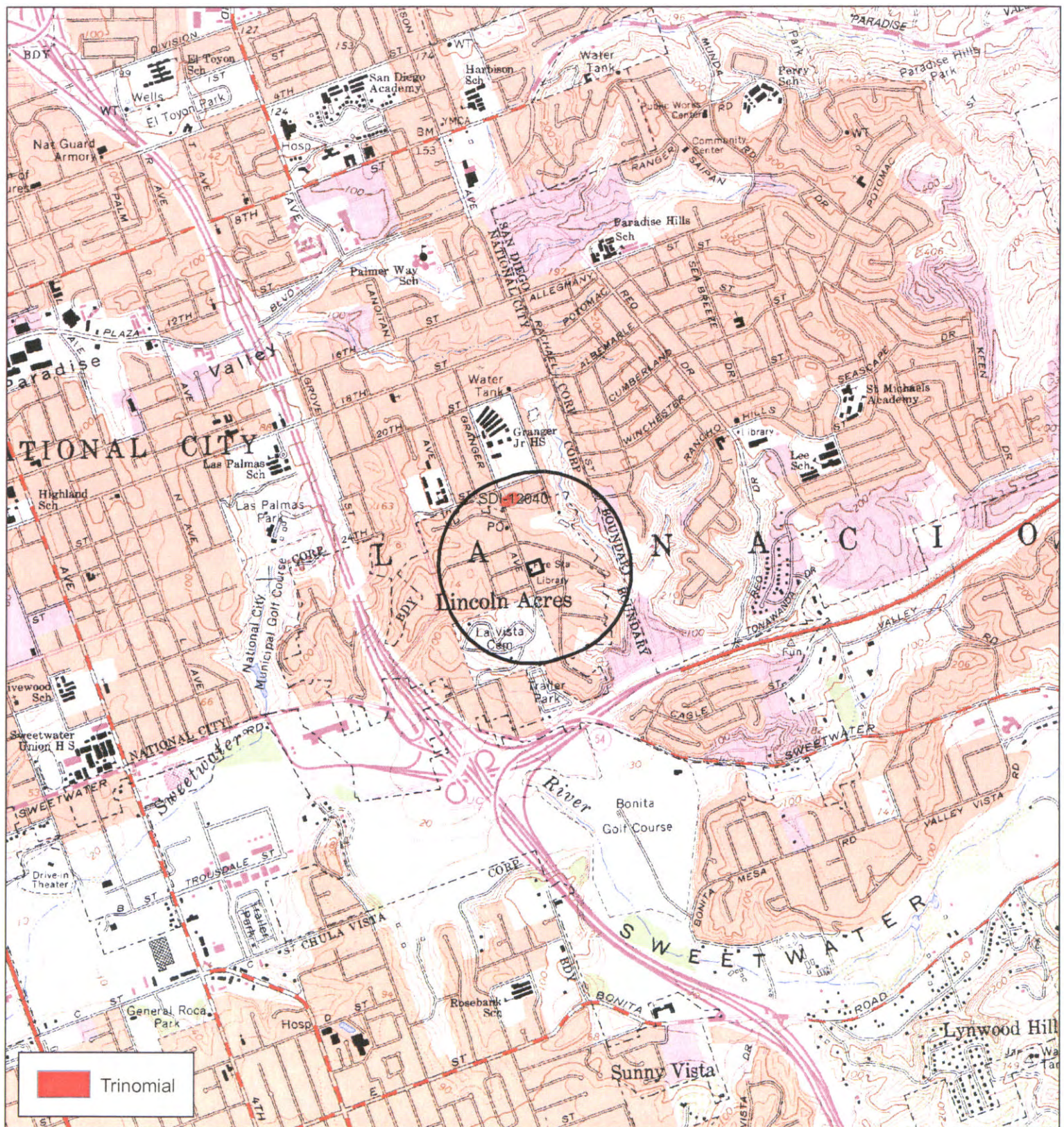
RUSH: yes

This is not an invoice. Please pay from the monthly billing statement

There are no previously recorded historical resources that have been assigned Primary designations on file at the South Coastal Information Center within ¼ mile of the current project.



South Coastal Information Center
5283 El Cajon Boulevard, Suite 250
San Diego CA, 92105-1254
(619) 594-5682
scic_gis@mail.sdsu.edu



Historical Resources with Trinomial Designations

1:24,000

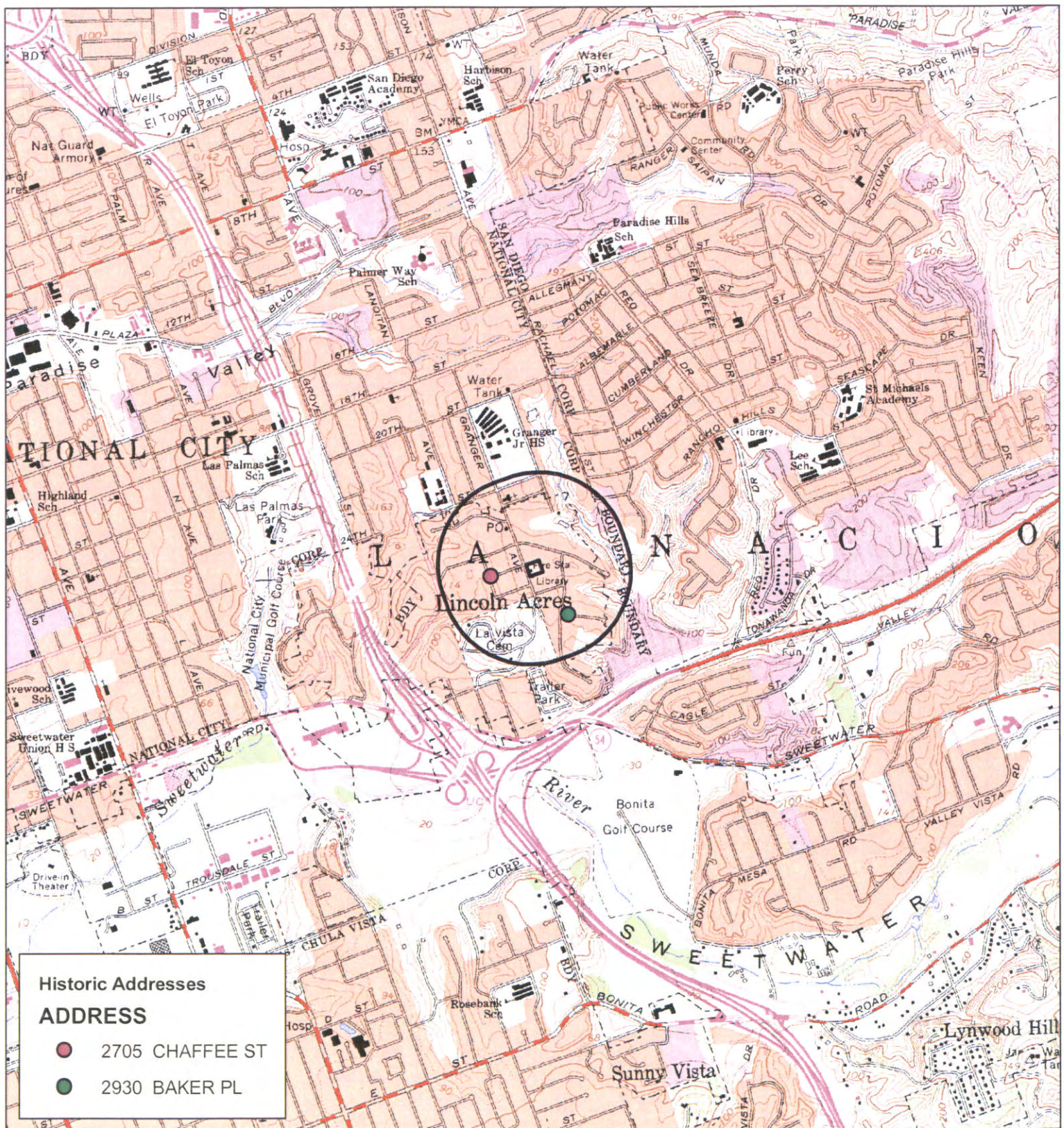
0

1 Mile

Destiny S. Larberg, July 02, 2008



South Coastal Information Center
5283 El Cajon Boulevard, Suite 250
San Diego CA, 92105-1254
(619) 594-5682
scic_gis@mail.sdsu.edu



Historic Addresses

To confirm the current status of a resource, please call the
SCIC at the phone number listed in the letterhead.

1:24,000

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Mile

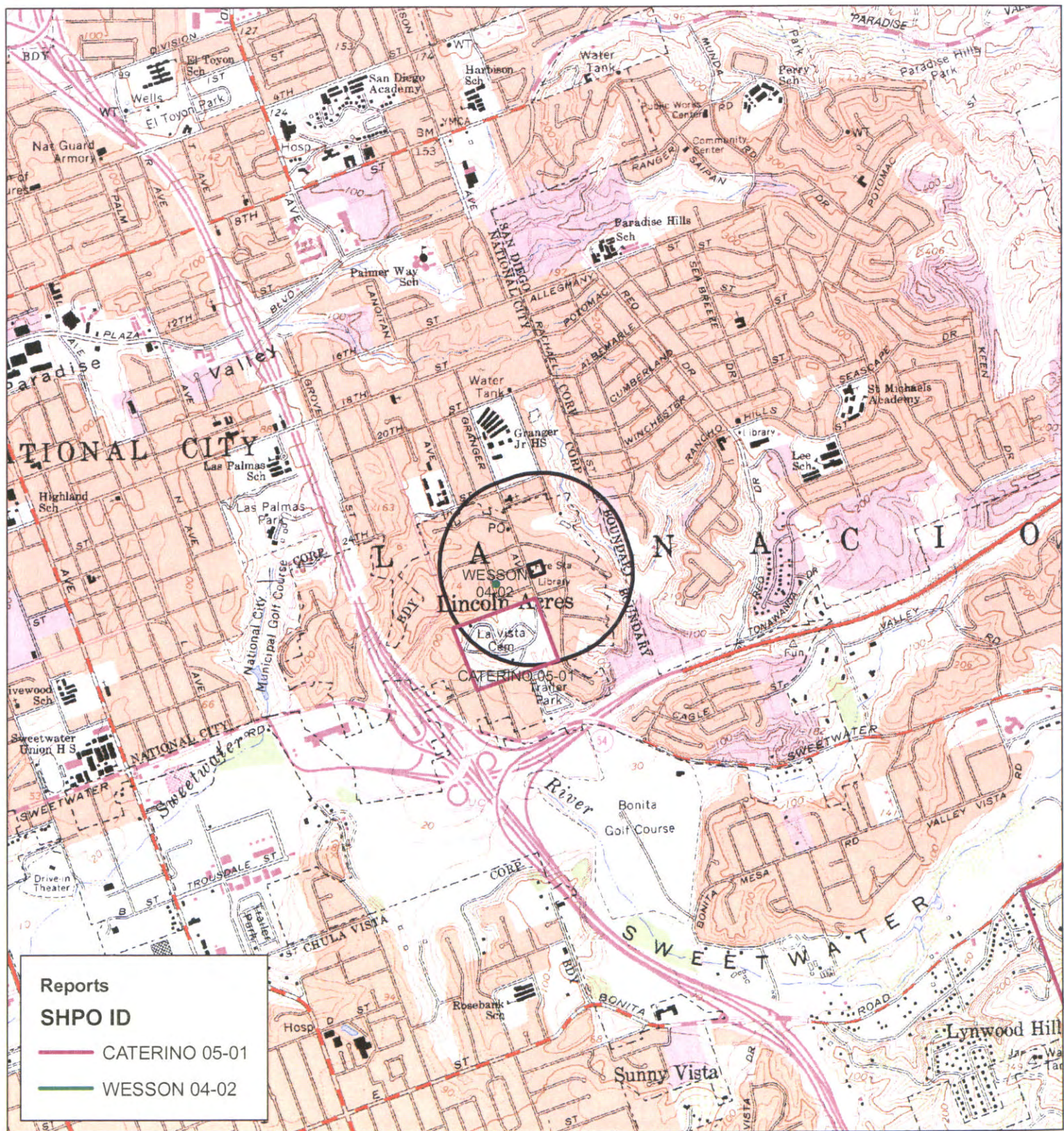
Destiny S. Larberg, July 02, 2008

USGS 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map
National City Quadrangle





South Coastal Information Center
5283 El Cajon Boulevard, Suite 250
San Diego CA, 92105-1254
(619) 594-5682
scic_gis@mail.sdsu.edu



Reports

1:24,000

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Destiny S. Larberg, July 02, 2008

USGS 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map
National City Quadrangle



